

SENATE BILL SB-60

Introduced by Senator Tim Grayson (D-9)

An act relating to California Higher Education Affordability and Access Act.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB-60, Tim Grayson (D-9). California Higher Education Affordability and Access Act.

Existing law establishes state financial aid programs to help California students attend college and provides for the administration of state student financial aid programs by the California Student Aid Commission. California's public higher education system also includes the University of California, the California State University, and the California Community Colleges.

Existing law provides financial aid through various state and federal programs. However, students and families may still face educational costs that are not fully covered by available financial aid, including required educational expenses, books, supplies, transportation, and other costs associated with attending college.

This bill would establish the California Higher Education Affordability and Access Grant Program to provide additional financial assistance to eligible California students attending a public institution of higher education. The program would prioritize students with demonstrated financial need and students who are the first in their families to attend college.

The bill would also require the California Student Aid Commission to provide an annual report regarding the number of students receiving grants, the amount of funding distributed, and the general educational costs covered by the program. The purpose of the reporting requirement is to increase transparency regarding the use of state funding and the costs students face when attending public institutions.

The bill would appropriate \$100,000,000 from the General Fund to the California Student Aid Commission for the implementation of the program.

Vote: Majority. **Appropriations/fiscal:** yes. **Local program:** no.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1:

The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) Higher education provides California residents with opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in the state's economy and communities.

(b) The cost of attending college can create financial barriers for California students, particularly students from low-income families and students who are the first in their families to attend college.

(c) State financial aid programs provide important assistance to California students, but additional support may be necessary to help students meet educational expenses that remain after other financial aid has been applied.

(d) Increasing transparency regarding student costs and the use of state higher education funding can help students, families, and policymakers better understand the financial challenges associated with attending college.

(e) It is the intent of the Legislature to expand access to higher education while helping California students manage the costs associated with obtaining a college education.

SECTION 2:

The California Student Aid Commission shall establish and administer the **California Higher Education Affordability and Access Grant Program**.

(a) The program shall provide grants to eligible California residents enrolled at a University of California campus, California State University campus, or California Community College.

(b) To the extent permitted by available funding, priority shall be given to students who:

(1) Demonstrate financial need based on information provided through an applicable state or federal financial aid application.

(2) Are the first member of their immediate family to attend a postsecondary educational institution.

(3) Are enrolled at least half-time in an eligible program of study.

(c) A student receiving assistance through the program may use the grant for eligible educational expenses, including tuition and fees, books and supplies, transportation, and other educational costs approved by the California Student Aid Commission.

SECTION 3:

(a) The California Student Aid Commission shall establish application and eligibility procedures for the program.

(b) The commission shall coordinate, to the extent feasible, with existing state and federal financial aid programs to reduce unnecessary administrative burdens on students.

(c) The commission shall make information about the program available to students and families through schools, colleges, universities, and the commission's internet website.

(d) The University of California, California State University, and California Community Colleges shall cooperate with the commission in providing students with information about the program.

SECTION 4:

(a) The sum of **one hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000)** is hereby appropriated from the General Fund to the California Student Aid Commission for purposes of establishing and administering the California Higher Education Affordability and Access Grant Program.

(b) Of the amount appropriated pursuant to subdivision (a), no more than 5 percent may be used by the commission for administrative costs associated with establishing and operating the program.

(c) The remaining funds shall be used for grants to eligible students pursuant to this act.

SECTION 5:

(a) On or before January 1, 2028, and annually thereafter, the California Student Aid Commission shall publish a report regarding the implementation of the program.

(b) The report shall include, at a minimum, all of the following:

(1) The number of students who received grants.

(2) The total amount of grant funding distributed.

(3) The types of institutions attended by grant recipients.

(4) The general categories of educational expenses for which grant funding was used.

(5) The number of first-generation college students receiving assistance.

(c) The report shall be made publicly available on the commission's internet website.

SECTION 6:

The California Student Aid Commission may adopt regulations and procedures necessary to implement this act.

SECTION 7:

This act shall take effect on January 1, 2027.